



United States Senate Budget Committee

JEFF SESSIONS | Ranking Member

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For Immediate Release

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Sessions Renews Call: Senate Shouldn't Recess, Should Stay To Work On Debt Ceiling, Budget

"On the floor, we spend week after week on bills that have little or nothing to do with our economic danger. We name post offices and courthouses but ignore the gathering fiscal storm. And now the Senate is scheduled to take next week off... Before the Memorial Day recess I presented to the Majority Leader a letter, signed by 46 Republican Senators, stating that we should not recess but remain in session to work on a budget plan... I renew the request from our letter... Until we work on a budget, until we work on the debt limit—until we work on the people's business—we have no right to adjourn this body. To do so would be to fail the public once again."

"We also owe the people we serve an open, honest debate over the debt limit. This shouldn't be a negotiation behind closed doors, revealed to the public at the last moment, rushed to passage in a panic—only to learn later of more gimmicks and empty promises... Let's hold votes, dozens if necessary. Let's hold hearings. Let's have an open debate. The House Republican budget cuts six trillion in federal spending over six years. Let's hold votes to see whether the Democrat-led Senate is willing to cut that much. If not six trillion, then what about five trillion in spending cuts? What about four?"

WASHINGTON—U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee, spoke on the Senate floor today and challenged Senate Democrats not to recess the chamber as planned for next week with the debt ceiling looming and without having passed a budget in 791 days. Sessions also asked the president and vice president to make the debt proposals from the White House-led meetings public so they can be evaluated in accordance with Senate procedure.

Sessions' remarks, as prepared, follow:

"Mr. President, we are faced with an extraordinary fiscal crisis and yet this chamber has done almost nothing to confront it. We are borrowing forty cents of every dollar

we spend. In three months our gross debt will be larger than our entire economy. Our nation's staggering debt is already costing millions of jobs and threatens millions more. More than 22 million Americans are out of work or unable to find work full time. A majority of Americans now fear the next generation will be worse off than their own.

And, in just five weeks, we are told we will reach the firm deadline on our nation's \$14.3 trillion debt limit.

But what has the Democrat-led Senate done to address these dangers?

This year the Senate hasn't produced a budget, hasn't met to work on a budget, and hasn't passed a budget in 791 days. During this time we've spent more than \$7 trillion and added \$3.2 trillion to our debt.

On the floor, we spend week after week on bills that have little or nothing to do with our economic danger. We name post offices and courthouses but ignore the gathering fiscal storm.

And now the Senate is scheduled to take next week off—to go into recess—to celebrate the 4th of July. We unite as a nation to celebrate our unique heritage and way of life—a way of life earned through hard work, responsibility, and sacrifice.

Before the Memorial Day recess I presented to the Majority Leader a letter, signed by 46 Republican Senators, stating that we should not recess but remain in session to work on a budget plan. Rather than face a vote on adjournment, the Majority Leader opted for a series of 'pro forma' sessions where the Senate gavel in only to gavel out moments later, having once again not done any work. So I renew the request from our letter.

We also owe the people we serve an open, honest debate over the debt limit. This shouldn't be a negotiation behind closed doors, revealed to the public at the last moment, rushed to passage in a panic—only to learn later of more gimmicks and empty promises.

It remains astonishing that we find ourselves now so close to the deadline without President Obama, the nation's chief executive, having once set forward a plan for what he wants to see in a debt limit deal.

The only concrete fiscal plan we have from the president is his February budget—which proved to be the emptiest promise of all. We were told by the president that his plan would not add more to the debt. In reality, it would grow the debt by \$13 trillion. It is precisely these kinds of empty promises we must avoid in a debt limit package. For that reason, I am calling on the president and vice president to make public the proposals discussed during their secret meetings, including the tax hikes the White

House has pushed with such zeal. If they believe in these tax hikes let the American people see them. Let the Congressional Budget Office provide an estimate. And let the Budget Committee meet to address their fiscal impact.

It's time to remove the blindfold.

Since the election in November, with the Congress divided between the Democrat Senate and Republican House, we have seen an increasingly reliance on closed-door meetings to resolve our greatest challenges. In so doing, Congress has once again ignored the public will.

Ultimately, our challenges can only be solved through the democratic process. Let's hold votes, dozens if necessary. Let's hold hearings. Let's have an open debate. Democracy may be messy, it may be contentious, but it's the best system we have—and the only system that works.

The House Republican budget cuts \$6 trillion in federal spending over six years. Let's hold votes to see whether the Democrat-led Senate is willing to cut that much. If not six trillion, then what about five trillion in spending cuts? What about four?

The simple reality is that the American people expect us to reduce spending, not to increase the burden on taxpayers. The evidence shows, again and again, that spending cuts—not tax hikes—result in greater growth and more successful debt reduction. To make American competitive in the 21st century we need a smaller, leaner government—not a heavier, more burdensome tax code.

So let's have this debate. Let's have it out in the open. And let's allow the American people to decide.

But until we work on a budget, until we work on the debt limit—until we work on the people's business—we have no right to adjourn this body. To do so would be to fail the public once again.

America's future is filled with promise. But to achieve that promise we must rise to the occasion and face the defining challenge of our time.”

[Note: To view the letter signed by 46 Republican senators calling on the Senate to remain in session, please [click here](#). To view a report about Sessions' effort to block recess over the Memorial Day break, and Reid's backing down from a vote, please [click here](#).]

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